

Nightmare becomes a sweet dream for actor Robert Englund



FREDDY'S FRIGHTENING SUCCESS

WHEN the original *Nightmare On Elm Street* was released in 1984 on a shoestring budget, filmmakers were unprepared for the phenomenon they had created.

Although the film's star, disguised by a horribly-burnt mask, was a merciless teenage killer, the Freddy Krueger character has evolved as a cult figure.

Freddy, now a household name in the U.S., will feature in a new late-night TV series, *Freddy's Nightmares*, and is the inspiration for a hit single, *Nightmare On My Street*, and a new dance craze sweeping America, *The Freddy*.

But for Robert Englund, who plays Freddy, *Nightmare IV* has finally earned him recognition in his own right and allowed him to come out from behind the mask for a major publicity tour.

He now gets invited to celebrity events in Hollywood and had his recent wedding to set-decorator Nancy Booth covered by all the major newspapers and magazines.

Robert admits Freddy's cult following has reached new heights but doesn't regret his new-found fame when many "serious" actors would turn down work in horror films.

"If these movies were all my career consisted of, I'd be lying on a psychiatrist's couch, paranoid about typecasting," he says.

"But I've been around a long time as Robert Englund and my peers in Hollywood simply know me as a good character actor who just happens to be riding a rocket right now with a hit movie."

As well as theatre and television work, his film appearances include *Buster And Billy*, *Stay Hungry* and *The Last Of The Cowboys*.

"So I've had fame before," he says, "although never to this extent, obviously."

In *Nightmare On Elm Street IV*, Freddy comes back for his revenge, using his powers to get inside the dreams of the teenagers in Springwood to kill them with their own worst nightmares.

Robert makes no apologies for scaring his audiences and making famous a character who is not the

ideal role model for teenagers.

"I don't worry about role models because the buck stops at the parents," he says. And, as Robert points out, some youngsters would rather deal with screen horrors than the ones in their own lives.

"I've been to visit a lot of leukemia groups for young kids and they tell me that watching movies like *Nightmare On Elm Street* helps take their mind off their own tragedies."

But Robert sheepishly admits he's had his own scary moments with the character.

"When we were filming the first one, I took a nap in the trailer with my Freddy face on," he says.

"Suddenly there was a banging on the door to come and get me for the next scene and I woke up suddenly and was disoriented.

"I looked up and there was this horrific face staring back at me in the mirror, copying my actions.

"So I did what any of Freddy Krueger's victims would do — I screamed for my life!"

*From Jenny Cooney
in Los Angeles*

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